

**Connecticut Department of Transportation  
Project No. 098-101  
Replacement of Bridge No. 01127  
Route 80 (Foxon Road) over Farm River, North Branford, CT**

**Follow-Up Public Informational Meeting**

**Date:** Tuesday, November 12, 2013 @ 7:30 p.m.

**Place:** Council Chambers, North Branford Town Hall

**In Attendance:**

Connecticut Department of Transportation:

Tim Fields, P.E.

Sowatei K. Lomotey, P.E.

Derrick Ireland

STV, Incorporated – Consulting Engineers:

Richard Ezyk, P.E.

James Sherwonit, P.E.

**Presentation:**

Presented before North Branford Council Meeting and Public:

Eight members from the City Council, Town Manager, Town Engineers and Town Clerk, approximately nineteen individuals from the public.

A power-point presentation of the proposed project was delivered followed by a lively discussion:

- An introductory presentation by Mr. Sowatei K. Lomotey
- A detailed presentation by Mr. Richard Ezyk
- A rights-of-way acquisition process was presented by Mr. Derrick Ireland

**Summary of the Presentation and Determinations:**

- The project consists of the replacement of the existing bridge structure carrying Route 80 (Foxon Road) over the Farm River with a new single span bridge structure which would be constructed in the same location and alignment as the existing structure. The east and west roadway approaches would be improved on a slightly raised vertical profile, approximately 8 inches, to match the finished grade of the new bridge

structure. This would improve the hydraulic opening under the new bridge structure.

- The main reasons for the existing bridge replacement include: (1) In 'poor' structural condition. (2) Hydraulically deficient waterway opening. (3) Functionally obsolete structure.
- The estimated total construction cost of the project is \$3,100,000. The project is anticipated to be undertaken using 80% Federal funds and 20% State funds.
- The project is anticipated to be awarded in the Fall of 2015 and completed in the Fall of 2016. The schedule is preliminary and dependent on receiving funding for construction, receipt of all required property easements and acquisition of environmental permits.
- The existing bridge was described as follows: The existing single span bridge, built in 1930, has a total length of 37'-8", overall width of 31'-0" and roadway width of 28'-0". The bridge lies on a straight horizontal alignment but in a sag vertical curve, the lowest point in the Farm River basin. The average daily traffic (ADT) recorded in 2010 was 13,400 vehicles.
- The proposed bridge was described as follows: The proposed bridge deck will consist of 21-inch deep pre-stressed pre-cast concrete units buttressed together by post-tensioning. The deck would be constructed and supported integrally on the new concrete abutments built behind the existing abutments. The concrete abutments would be supported on steel pile foundations. The proposed roadway would be bounded by new concrete parapets and (32 ft curb to curb roadway) will be 4 ft. wider than the existing bridge roadway. The low chord of the bridge will be 27 inches higher increasing the waterway opening. Approach roadway work will be extended approximately 400 feet west of the bridge and 200 feet east of the bridge. New metal beam guiderail will be constructed at each bridge corner.
- Three options of Maintenance and Protection of Traffic (MPT) were studied for this project: (1) Detour using Local Roads: Local roads geometry is not adequate for truck traffic and overall volume of vehicles; Detour using State Roads: Results in a 12-mile long detour that is too cumbersome to be considered feasible (2) Detour using a temporary bridge bypass with associated roadway approaches resulting in property impacts along the south side of the existing bridge. The additional cost would be \$330K to construct and remove and restoration of affected properties. (3) Staged construction using traffic signals at the roadway

approaches to direct “Alternating one-way traffic” across the bridge. This third option was overwhelmingly rejected in the first Public Information Meeting held on Tuesday, September 17, 2013.

- This follow-up Public Information Meeting was held to present the second MPT option as the preferred detour for the project. The temporary bypass bridge would have the same roadway width as the existing bridge to carry two-way bi-directional traffic, east and west. Temporary construction easements would be required from two property owners on southeast and southwest of the bridge.
- The utilities within the project limits were described as an 8” diameter gas main along the south fascia, 48” water main on an independent structure 25’ upstream of the bridge and aerial electric, telecommunications and cable on poles along the north side. Existing utilities will be maintained in place or relocated as necessary during the proposed construction activities. The existing water main will not be impacted by this project. Coordination with the effected utility companies will be performed by STV, Inc. and the Department.
- The estimated total construction cost for the project is approximately \$3.1 million which would be 80% Federal funded and 20% State funded. The project is scheduled to be advertised and awarded in the Fall of 2015 with construction beginning in the Spring of 2016. With all necessary environmental permits and construction easements in place the construction duration is anticipated to last one season ending in the Fall of 2016.

### **Summary of Public Comments and Question:**

- Tony Catalano: Expressed concerns regarding the construction duration and impact on local businesses because of prior experiences of long unending construction activities on recent DOT Rt. 80 projects which had slowed down businesses.
- Don Cappelli: Can we fast track the construction to limit its duration?
- Response: The Department will look at ways to expedite the construction work.
- Dawn Jacobson: As a pool supply business owner she stated that 85% of her business is conducted between May 1 and Sept.1. She further stated that the construction schedule and proposed by-pass will severely impact her business. She favors a shorter construction duration.
- Joe Arpino Sr: Owner of the mobile park at the northeast quadrant. He

favors the Accelerated Bridge Construction Concept with a 2 week road closure as proposed at the first information meeting. He stated that there are 5 curb cuts into Rt. 80 and questioned if existing access into the mobile park was considered as part of the temporary by-pass plan.

Additional general comments were as follows:

- A number of people in the audience expressed concern that the local businesses will be adversely impacted as a result of this project.
- Some people requested for a single point of contact with the Department.
- Response: During the design phase the point of contact is Mr. Sowatei K. Lomotey. During the construction phase the Department's contact person will be determined and communicated to the residents. The Department's construction office will be responsible to answer all concerns.
- Some requested for new traffic counts since the current traffic count is from 2010.
- Response: New traffic counts won't affect the design since the alternating one-lane traffic option is no longer under consideration. The temporary bypass will carry the same amount of traffic with minimal impacts.
- There is a concern that the required utility relocation work will delay the project if it is not carefully coordinated.
- Response: The Department and STV will coordinate the utility work during the design phase and some relocation work may be performed ahead of the start of construction.
- Where will the Contractor stage his work? Will he be blocking access to the businesses?
- Response: The Contractor will likely stage his work from the portion of Rt. 80 that lies within his work zone. Businesses will not be blocked by the Contractor's equipment and storage.
- Several members of the audience voiced their concern about the lack of trust with the Department resulting from their recent experience with other Department projects, notably ongoing improvements to Rt. 80. A question was asked if the Department personnel assigned to this project worked on the Rt. 80 improvements.
- Response: No one assigned to this project was involved with the Rt. 80 improvement projects.
- One member of the audience stated that he does not believe that there will be no lane closures. How will the by-pass tie-ins be constructed

- without lane closure?
- Response: Lane closures will take place at off-peak hours.
  - One member of the audience asked, “Why will the proposed bridge not have sidewalks? “
  - Response: There is no sidewalk now and the town had not requested for sidewalks.
  - One member of the audience stated that Rt. 80 may be widened to 4 lanes in the future, and why isn’t the proposed bridge widened to support the planned future 4 lanes roadway?
  - Response: If Rt. 80 were widened in the future the new bridge will be widened at that time.
  - There was a general concern, and outright distrust of the Department, that the construction time line will extend beyond what is being proposed by the Department. It was suggested that the construction contract be made “bullet proof”.
  - Response: The Department will prepare a construction time-line for the project. It was stated that incentive/decentive clauses would be made a part of the contract document to insure the construction time scheduled is followed.
  - The Department further suggested and was accepted to meet, at a future date, with the concerned business owners, the town manager and engineers to specifically present to them the appropriate answers to their construction staging and duration concerns.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

**Next Steps For the Department:**

- The Department has asked STV Engineers to develop a complete construction time-line and a calendar-days chart from start to finish.
- The Department has asked STV Engineers to review the temporary by-pass alignment with the intention of reducing the impact to the local businesses by reducing the design speed and/or adjusting the Rt. 80 geometry to shorten the approach roadway limits of construction. The Department Geometric Design section reviewed the bypass road alignment and suggested improvements to the driveway sight lines by striping 3 ft. vs. 1 ft. shoulders on the bypass bridge. An advisory lower design speed is acceptable in construction zones.
- The Department has tentatively scheduled a future meeting on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. with the Town Manager, Town Engineer and the local business owners to discuss the findings.